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Deliberative Process/Ex. 5

by Michael Patrick Leahy 26 Aug 2015 12

The EPA is out with an internal review into its own actions that created the August 5 Gold King mine blowout in Silverton, Colorado that spilled 3 million gallons of toxic waste into the Animas River.

But both Dave Taylor, the retired geologist who predicted in a July 30 letter to the editor published in the Silverton Standard that the EPA project that caused the blowout would fail, and Todd King, owner of the Gold King mine, disagree with the conclusions of EPA's internal review.

Taylor disagrees with the EPA's conclusion the Gold King mine adit — entrance — blowout was "likely inevitable," as the internal review states on page 9.

In the 11-page report, the agency largely absolved itself of blame, with the key conclusion found on page 9:

In reviewing the pertinent documents provided, interviews conducted, visiting the site and evaluating the photo logs, the Team concludes that the Adit blowout was likely inevitable. Actions taken by the EPA OSC to pull out the site personnel and crew from and near the Adit, just prior to the blowout, probably avoided any fatalities from the pressurized Adit blowout.

“If it [the Gold King mine entrance] was left undisturbed it could have stayed in the same condition for a hundred years or more, but the EPA disturbed it,” Taylor tells Breitbart News.

“A better analogy,” Taylor adds, “is it is similar to cocking a pistol and laying it on the table. If no one touches the trigger it would sit there forever and not go off.”

Todd Hennis, owner of the Gold King mine, tells Breitbart News the EPA’s internal review ignores key facts about the agency’s actions that caused the spill.

Hennis was coerced on threat of a \$37,500 daily fine from the EPA four years ago to grant the agency access to and effective control of his property.

“This report does not address the actions of EPA in 2014 to backfill the mine portal ‘to prevent a blowout during the winter,’ which in turn is presumed to have blocked the discharge pipe inlets, and in fact caused the blowout of August 5, 2015,” Hennis tells Breitbart News.

“On that date,” Hennis adds, “the EPA contractor and EPA supervisor(s) caused the portal of the mine to be excavated to remove the backfill material, which in fact held the water in and allowed the water to accumulate.”

At a phone media conference held Wednesday afternoon at which a number of other media outlets posed questions to EPA officials, Breitbart News was not allowed to ask a single question.

Breitbart News has instead posed that question to Melissa Harrison, the EPA press secretary, via email. We asked Ms. Harrison whether Dave Taylor was wrong or the EPA internal review was wrong about the “inevitability” of a Gold King mine entrance blowout.

We have not received a response to this question from either Ms. Harrison or any representative of the EPA.